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Teaching Writing Through the Principles of Dialogue: Key Issues and an Approach to Composition

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Abstract

This paper presents my personal approach to teaching writing--an approach which is based on the principles of dialogue. The first section discusses some of the difficulties inherent in writing and some of the needs which all writing students have. Suggestions are made for easing those difficulties and meeting those needs. The first section concludes by drawing on the work of Paulo Freire to summarize my approach.

The second section consists of discussions of a syllabus, error correction, models, and student journals. An appendix at the end of the paper contains materials which resulted from my use of the ideas presented in this paper in the classroom.

ERIC descriptors: English (Second Language), Writing Apprehension, Writing (Composition), Writing Difficulties, Writing Evaluation, Writing Exercises, Writing Instruction, Writing Processes

CONTENTS

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a very complex language skill area. While much has been said and written about writing and the challenge of teaching it, writing remains an enigma, often for both teachers and students. It is the last of the skills attained in one's first language, and is usually last in second language acquisition as well. In fact, many people never learn to write well in any language. While speaking and writing share the common goal of communication, speaking is essentially social, and writing is essentially a lonely task. In this paper, I present an approach to teaching writing which makes the writer's task less lonely. I focus on second or foreign language instruction, but much of what is presented here is applicable to first language instruction as well.

The ideas are presented in two parts--essentially, theory and practice. The first section offers some insight on why writing is difficult, along with some general suggestions for easing the difficulty which are consistent with my approach to teaching. This section also includes an analysis of the needs of second or foreign language students in the writing class. The first section concludes with the presentation of my approach to teaching writing, an approach which is based primarily on Paulo Freire's theories of dialogue and authentic education.

The second section presents thoughts on methods and techniques which I used in the classroom as I was developing this approach. It includes a syllabus for an intermediate level English as a Second Language writing class, which is expanded to include specific suggestions for approaching each unit. In addition to the expanded syllabus, the second section con-

tains a discussion of some critical issues in error correction and presents some basic techniques consistent with my approach. This is followed by an analysis of the role and use of models, several examples of which are provided in the appendix. Finally, some strategies for using student journals are discussed.

SOME DIFFICULTIES INHERENT IN WRITING

Very little is known about what actually goes on in a writer's head between the decision to write and the act of writing. What is obvious to everyone who has tried to write seriously is that it is difficult. I suspect that frequent trips to the coffee pot, the refrigerator, and the window, along with wastebaskets full of tightly packed wads of paper, are symptomatic of nearly all attempts at written expression, and all that I have read by writers writing about writing bears that out. The time spent by the human race staring blankly at blank or mostly blank sheets of paper spans lifetimes. The first point I would like to make, then, is quite simple: teachers need to acknowledge that what they are asking their students to do is not easy. In fact, writing is often quite painful. Many teachers seem to have forgotten that giving a writing assignment, and then evaluating it, is nothing at all like writing.

Getting stuck and unstuck

Were teachers to be required to write, say, a comparison-contrast essay, and submit it to their peers for evaluation every time they assigned one, I am convinced that classroom methodology would change dramatically. First, there would be more emphasis on the generation and organization of ideas. The teachers themselves would be staring at pieces of paper at-

tempting to find the appropriate words to express their ideas and then shuffling those papers around trying to organize their thoughts. Being articulate people with considerable writing experience, the teachers would probably succeed, but hopefully, in the process, they would ask themselves why the task was so difficult. Hopefully they would recognize that their students, with far less experience, and far fewer linguistic resources, must be having far more difficulty putting their thoughts together on paper.

Marlene Scardamalia, Carl Bereiter, and Hillel Goelman, in an article entitled, "The Role of Production Factors in Writing Ability," present some interesting findings which shed light on these problems. While their research focuses primarily on the development of sustained discourse in children, their conclusions are relevant to adults as well. They note that the brevity of children's compositions may be attributed to the fact that they are equivalent to single conversational turns, and that children have not yet acquired the ability to keep the words coming without some sort of external response.

> How do children acquire the ability to sustain language production without external signals? One answer is that perhaps they never do--entirely. The problem of keeping going seems to be a recurrent one, even for many accomplished writers, and it is often amazing what trivial stimuli will suffice to get a stuck writer unstuck--something as slight as the question, "Well, what is it you're trying to say?"
>
> People learn to produce longer compositions, however, and a reasonable conjecture in the light of current discourse processing theory is that they do so by learning more extended schemata or scripts for discourse production. With such schemata--for instance, a schema that tells you what kinds of elements to include in an opinion essay and that guides you in selecting and ordering these elements--the writer will keep producing under the guidance of high-level knowledge about what to do next.[1]

For the children in the study, slight prompting when they got "stuck" re-

sulted in significantly extended, and higher quality, production.

In many ways, the problems experienced by the children in the study are analogous to those which second language students experience. Teachers need to be aware that when students who are normally able to express themselves in conversation seem unable to keep writing, what is probably happening is that they have run out of strategies and need encouragement, not that they don't have ideas or are unwilling to work. Frequently, all that is required in resolving breakdowns in the flow of ideas from head to paper is some minimal prompting from a sympathetic reader or listener. This means that, rather than simply giving and then evaluating assignments, the teacher must question ideas and organization, suggest words, phrases, and new possibilities, give encouragement, and praise achievement at all stages, from the seed of an idea to the finished product.

Balancing creating with cleaning up

In addition to the problem of keeping the ideas flowing, there is the problem of striking a balance between the writer's creative energies and the need to attend to the linguistic and mechanical details of writing. To return to the hypothetical situation of teachers submitting their writing to their peers, it is easy to imagine the teachers soon coming to ask their peers for a second chance. When their peers looked down over their glasses and pointed out that a particular participial phrase was dangling or that such and such was an interesting way to spell a certain word, teachers would begin saying to their peers, "This is just a rough draft. What do you think?" What the teacher would mean by that is, "What do you think of my ideas?" not, "What do you think of my grammar and spelling?"

Scardamalia, Bereiter, and Goelman present the situation very simply:

> . . . having to attend to low-level considerations such as spelling and punctuation interferes with attention to higher-level concerns of composition. . . . The underlying psychological premise is (that) the writer has a limited amount of attention to allocate and that whatever is taken up with the mechanical demands of written language must be taken away from something else.[2]

That "something else" is the ideas which the writer is trying to express. The dichotomy between ideas and the mechanics of writing can be seen in the two roles which writers play, one creative and the other clerical. While both roles are important, the attention to mechanics (the clerical) must follow the attention to ideas (the creative). The clerk's task is to organize and clarify what has already been created so that the reader can get the message.

When teachers don't write, they allow themselves to become removed from the creative process. They tend to see their job in the classroom as supervising the clerks, rather than facilitating both roles of the writer in their students. Obviously, students writing in a foreign language will produce papers overflowing with errors, and those errors must be dealt with in some way. The goal of the course, however, should not be to rid specific papers of specific errors. The goal of the course should be to help students move toward becoming confident, competent, independent writers. Perhaps the most important thing that teachers can do for students along these lines is to foster from the beginning of the course the idea that writing is a process with several stages of development--that writing several drafts is natural and necessary for all writers.

Making sense to others

There is a third reason why writing is so difficult: the difficulty of reaching an audience--of making sense. No doubt somewhere in the course of our imaginary teachers proudly bearing their work to their peers, a

conversation something like the following would take place. The peers would look up from the paper and say, "Um, this is interesting, but I'm not sure I understand." The teachers would be devastated. After all, they know exactly what it is they are saying, and they were up all night getting it down on paper. How is it possible that their peers don't understand?

Effective writing is more than just good ideas expressed with good grammar and spelling. Effective writing has to stand alone and be complete. As E.D. Hirsh points out in The Philosophy of Writing,

> . . . oral speech normally takes place in a concrete situation that supplies external, extra-verbal clues to meaning, while written speech, lacking this dimension, is able to communicate effectively only if it supplies much of its context within the verbal medium alone.[3]

To a certain extent, this point overlaps with the problem of developing strategies for extended discourse--the schema for selecting and ordering the elements of a particular kind of essay. In addition to managing those stylistic conventions, however, writers must know their audience. They must know what to include and what to leave out, what their readers know and what they need to be told. In conversation, missing information is supplied, and confusion is avoided, through the interaction of the participants. They question and explain, interrupt and clarify, nod knowingly and slap each other on the back. A finished piece of writing, on the other hand, has none of these advantages. Writers have only one chance. Their readers either understand or they don't.

Students are seldom given the chance to grow in their understanding of how audiences react to what they read; they seldom see the slippery nature of written communication first hand. In fact, students seldom have readers. Rather, they have one very peculiar kind of reader--their teacher.

Teachers are important, but they are usually not the audience they think they are, and they are almost never the student's preferred audience. The classroom is artificial. The students are pretending to write for an audience, and the teacher is pretending to be that audience. If the students already knew how to effectively reach an audience, then there would be no problem, and the teacher would simply be a privileged reader, but they don't, and the teacher isn't.

The solution to this problem is to expand the audience. The old teacher-student-teacher pattern must be broken and rebuilt into a new multi-directional network, a network in which everyone in the classroom is involved in what everyone else is doing.

To accomplish this, teachers need to ask students to work together in several ways. First, the students should be encouraged to tell each other what it is they would like to write about and to get ideas from each other about the kinds of topics which are of interest. Then, they should be asked to share their first attempts in order to learn what parts their fellow students like and what they don't like, what they understand and what they don't understand, what they want more of and what they don't need to be told at all. Finally, the students should be asked to share the fruits of their labor with their classmates, thus getting a fuller reward than the teacher can ever offer. Such a multi-directional network allows students to support each other and makes them responsible to each other while preparing them in a positive way to become independent writers--writers who know how to reach their audience.

Starting early

The challenges I have discussed to this point are inherent in the task of writing, but I see another, unnecessary but very real, reason for the

difficulties students have with writing. Perhaps because it is so troublesome, writing has traditionally been seen and taught as an advanced skill, and second or foreign language students are seldom asked to write beyond the sentence level until near the end of their formal study of the language. It seems to me, however, that it is because writing is do difficult that students should begin to write much earlier. Again, work with children has provided some clues as to how this can be accomplished.

The language-experience approach, developed for use in first language reading instruction, has been adapted for use in the second or foreign language classroom, primarily as a way of easing the transition from controlled, error-free writing to freer, risk-taking expression. This approach introduces students to written language through the active use of whatever oral language they possess.[4] Stories are dictated to the teacher by the students, thus closely linking speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The teacher guides the students as they relate particular experiences, encouraging them to express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings. While it is the teacher who is doing the actual writing, the students know that what has been written is theirs, and they feel excited, even powerful, at seeing what they can do.

Some teachers may need to reassess their definitions of writing, error correction, and even cheating in order to put this approach to use, but I believe that the language-experience approach offers important insights on teaching and learning. While it is true that speaking and writing have essential differences, the link between them is also essential and should be taken advantage of throughout the instructional process, from the lowest levels onward. I encourage discussion and debate prior to writing even at the highest levels. (This is discussed further in the DIALOGUE section of this paper.) At low levels, this kind of writing effectively

prepares students to become independent writers in the furture by building self-respect and instilling a sense of creativity and fun in the student's view of language. In addition, storytelling and other kinds of oral reporting readily lend themselves to development as essays based on chronological, spacial, and logical order--the traditional forms of early writing, and much of later academic work as well.

So far, I have discussed what I see as the four principal reasons why writing is difficult and suggested some solutions for those problems. First, to ease the problem of keeping ideas flowing, teachers need to be intimately involved throughout the writing process, serving as prompters when students get "stuck." Second, to ease the problem of balancing the creative and clerical tasks of writers, teachers need to nurture both creators and clerks, presenting the task of writing as a process with natural stages of development. Third, to ease the problem of reaching an audience, teachers need to promote student-student, as well as teacher-student, interaction in the classroom. Finally, to enable students to begin writing earlier, thus providing invaluable experience and more positive attitudes towards writing, the principles of the language-experience approach should be applied.

WHAT STUDENTS NEED

In addition to thinking about why writing is difficult, teachers must think about the needs of their students on a more personal level. Effective teaching is not merely a matter of conveying information, and although language students are placed in classes, and advanced from level to level, almost solely on the basis of their linguistic skills, students need more from their teachers than explanation and correction of those skills. It

is obviously impossible, and probably inappropriate, for teachers to meet all of the needs of their students, but I would like to suggest three basic kinds of student needs which teachers must acknowledge and work with if their teaching is to be truly effective. These are: the need for self-esteem, the need for self-expression, and the need for control of the language.

Self-esteem: timid students

The need for self-esteem has many manifestations, but for the purpose of the second or foreign language class it is most apparent in a reluctance to take risks and be vulnerable to criticism. Students who, for one reason of another, do not feel capable of saying what they want to say, or feel that they have nothing to say, are generally unwilling to try to say much of anything. Limited vocabulary and structural understanding, lack of confidence in themselves and their teacher, and perhaps little previous success in the classroom combine to immobilize these students. They see writing as a battle, and when confronted with the do-or-die situation of a blank page, they are terrified. Their first impulse is to retreat.

In working with these students, teachers need first and foremost to create a non-threatening environment. These students need, more than anything, to enter into the task of writing in an atmosphere of security and acceptance while their confidence grows. They need to feel that they will not be humiliated; they need to feel that anything they have to offer the class will be respected as part of themselves. To help students gain this sense of confidence, teachers need to monitor and analyze the kinds of messages they are sending to their students, not only in written feedback and evaluation, but in the kinds of oral responses they give to what students say and do in class, and in the area of non-verbal communication as well.

If the students sense that the teacher believes in them, it will be easier for them to believe in themselves, and only when students believe in themselves can they express themselves in a meaningful way.

Self-expression: entrenched students

The need for self-expression is exemplified by those students who are entrenched in the grammar of the language. They have lost sight of communication as the purpose of language, and are intent on firing carefully constructed volleys of the most complicated structures they know at the only target they feel counts--the teacher. This obsession precludes effective writing. Such an attitude is the product of an educational system which seems to tell students they need only a high TOEFL score, for example, before they can get on with their lives. These students come into the classroom expecting to be judged by some huge right-wrong machine and, because of that expectation, often seem to resent being asked to use the language to express themselves.

The task of the teacher on this front is somehow to lure these students out from behind the grammar. The teacher must create an environment in which conveying messages, not manipulating structures, is important. To do this, teachers need to help students find a sense of purpose--a reason to express themselves. These students need inspiration; they need to be stimulated and challenged; they need to feel the presence of an audience. Above all, they need to see the point: that the power of language lies in its message, not its grammar; that structure serves ideas.

Control: blindly heroic students

In addition to the timid students who need self-esteem, and the entrenched students in need of self-expression, there are the blindly heroic students, mounting gushy forays into English prose. These students need control of the language. They have a fairly high degree of confidence in

English, and they may very well be excellent writers in their native language, but while writing seems for them to be a relatively painless process, what they write seems careless and lacking in structural control. They have a lot to say, and are eager to say it, but they are relying either on what they know of the stylistic conventions of writing in their native languages, or on the conversational tools they have acquired in English, to carry them through in English composition as well.

These are the students most teachers are happiest to work with. They need to develop the disciplines of writing as they have traditionally been presented--outlining, paragraph development, sentence combining, word choice. This is not to say, however, that the best way to work with these students is the traditional way of insisting on an outline first and then having the students wade through pools of red ink, cleaning up their errors in draft after draft, until finally they have met the teacher's standards. Such methods are certain to cure blind heroism, but they do not necessarily produce confident independent writers. Teachers must take an approach which respects and works with the needs for self-esteem and self-expression, while helping students learn to control what they write.

DIALOGUE: IMPLICATIONS OF FREIREIAN PRINCIPLES

I have found the guiding principles for such an approach in the work of the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. Freire has primarily dedicated himself to the development of a system for teaching literacy to oppressed peoples in developing countries, but I believe that his educational philosophy is not only relevant but essential to effective teaching in any situation. The origin of much of what I have said so far lies in my understanding of Freire's work, especially the suggestions for changes in the way

teachers see their role, and the expanded view of the needs of students. I would like to specifically parallel what I have said to Freire's pedagogy as I conclude this presentation of my approach to teaching writing.

In the second chapter of Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire contrasts what he calls "banking education," education which results in the indoctrination of students into the status quo, with "problem-solving education," education which results in critical thinking. Related to the issues I raised earlier, banking education is focused on the control of the language--the traditional emphasis on skills. It tells the students what to think and do.

> Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing deposits. They do, it is true, have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store. But in the last analysis, it is men themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system. For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, men cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.[5]

In contrast to banking education, problem-solving education, with its emphasis on critical thinking and the dialectical nature of the world, uses dialogue to focus on students' attitudes and awareness--meeting first the need for self-esteem, and then moving the students toward self-expression. Critical thinking, the result of problem-solving education, leads the students to the ability to "read and write the world." Freire defines this "conscientization" process as learning to perceive causal relationships and contradictions in the world. Those who "read the world" understand what is happening around them; those who "write the world" act to change

what is happening around them. Teaching, in authentic education, empowers the students.

These are not mere idealistic slogans--the beauty of Freire's work is its pragmatism. His approach to education has had such great impact not because it is revolutionary, although clearly it is, but because it works. It works because the students come to sense and understand the power which is rightfully theirs. Whether it is the power to read and understand the bill an overseer hands you or the power to communicate your deepest feelings and desires to a reader, power is the ultimate motivating factor.

The crux of Freire's pedagogy is dialogue, which is both the end and the means of teaching. I touched on the ideas behind dialogue earlier in this paper when I referred to the need for teachers to develop a multi-directional network in which everyone in the class is involved in what everyone else is doing. In Freire's words, "Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students."[6] There are also parallels between what I presented as the ways in which teachers can meet the students' needs for self-esteem and self-expression and what Freire presents as the fundamental components of dialogue: love, as opposed to domination; humility, as opposed to arrogance; faith, as opposed to bureaucratic sterility. The timid and entrenched need to see clearly that the teacher is on their side.

In addition to demonstrating belief in and respect for the students, and serving as catalysts and guides throughout the educational process, teachers must also be active participants in the learning. This means that teachers are learning from the students and experiencing the activities with the class at the same time that they are initiating and guiding those

activities. Throughout the process, however, teachers must also convey an image of confidence and authority. This is vital to the students' sense of security, and there can be no dialogue without security. The students must feel that they are working with a competent professional--that the experience is going to be worth their time and money. While participating in the dialogue, accepting the students as credible resources, the teacher must also be seen as a credible resource.

All of these are attitudes which teachers must strive to maintain if students are to be helped to think critically. In addition, teachers themselves must think critically, especially in designing the program content of what they are teaching.

> For the anti-dialogical banking educator, the question of content simply concerns the program about which he will discourse to his students; and he answers his own question, by organizing his own program. For the dialogical, problem-posing teacher-student, the program content of education is neither a gift nor an imposition--bits of information to be deposited in the students--but rather the organized, systematized, and developed "re-presentation" to individuals of the things about which they want to know more.
>
> Authentic education is not carried out by "A" for "B" or by "A" about "B" but rather by "A" with "B," mediated by the world--a world which impresses and challenges both parties, giving rise to views or opinions about it. These views, impregnated with anxieties, doubts, hopes, or hopelessness, imply significant themes on the basis of which the program content of education can be built.[7]

On the most basic level, the material for the class must come out of the teachers' reading of the world and the students, and from the students themselves.

> For this reason I have always insisted that words used in organizing a literacy program come from the word universe of the people who are learning, expressing their actual language, their anxieties, fears, dreams. Words should be laden with the meaning of the people's existential experience, and not of the teacher's experience. Surveying what I call the word universe thus gives us the people's words, pregnant with the world, words from the people's reading of the world.[8]

Freire is discussing the teaching of literacy, but I see a clear relationship of these ideas to the points I raised earlier about when to begin teaching writing. Teachers should use whatever words the students have as the basis for writing, regardless of the level of English in the class.

Obviously, a standard textbook will not be sufficient in helping students feel personally compelled to express themselves, or in engaging them in "writing their worlds." Even if a book contained the desired curriculum goals and was written at an appropriate level for the students, no book can participate in dialogue. Books can supply models, provide exercises, and suggest ideas for compositions, but the most effective models are those which arise out of the experiences of the class and the teacher. Exercises, while important in giving students a sense of security when initially using new structures, are not particularly useful in fostering free writing, and preconceived topics of the homogenized kind found in textbooks are rarely inspiring or even relevant to the students in a particular class.

The principles of dialogue provide a firm pedagogical foundation for teaching writing. Dialogue involves the teacher as a participant and model while, at the same time, the instruction is focused on the needs and experiences of the students. Dialogue allows for the most efficient use of class time by integrating the skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Intrinsic to dialogue is a pre-writing stage, which all successful writers go through, and dialogue maximizes this time by incorporating a certain amount of pre- as well as post-facto error correction through the students' awareness of and responsibility to an audience. (By "error correction" here I am referring to a level of error which is often not attended to by teachers--the level of logic, organization, and content.) Finally, dialogue prepares the students to continue writing outside of class by focusing on

the development of positive attitudes, a sense of ownership, and, most of all, an understanding of the power which is theirs.

In section two of this paper, my attempts at applying these principles are discussed. I hope the issues I have raised, and the ideas I have presented, will help to resolve some of the troublesome aspects of teaching writing for my readers. At the same time, I hope that the dialectical nature of this approach to teaching is clear. Teaching writing according to the principles of dialogue means that the classroom experience will always be, to a certain extent, experimental. Teachers must find their own solutions, every time they teach.

PART TWO

INTRODUCTION

My approach to teaching asks a great deal of teachers, but I believe that it is not only the students, but teachers as well, who stand to gain from the ideas I am suggesting. This section of the paper provides a glimpse at the ways in which the principles presented in Part One may be applied in the classroom. The section has four parts: a presentation and discussion of a syllabus which has worked well for me; what I see as key issues in dealing with error correction; some thoughts on models, especially teacher-produced models; and a look at the role and use of student journals.

The methods and materials discussed in this section were developed as I taught, through my dialogue with one particular group of students. They are presented here as examples of the possibilities, not necessarily as solutions.

A SYLLABUS

The class in which this syllabus was used provided the composition component of a mid-intermediate intensive English course at Boston University's Center for English Langauge Orientation Programs. The course was twelve weeks long, and included sixty contact hours in writing. The syllabus consists of seven units, with the last week reserved for work on a final project. In addition, the students had copies of Linda Lonon Blanton's Intermediate Composition Practice: Book 2, which provided the "key words

and phrases" lists on which the model essays were based.[9] Sample lists appear in the appendix, preceding each of the three model essays.

While the long-range goals of students enrolled in programs such as this are primarily academic--most hope to study in American universities--their immediate needs are more practical. My goal in teaching this course was the development of the students' sense of themselves as writers, and I focused my attention on helping them to appreciate and use the power and playfulness of the language, as well as introducing them to the conventions of various forms of writing.

As I have said, I see a direct link between the ability to think critically and the ability to write independently and skillfully. My objective in developing this syllabus, then, was to provide a means to dialogue, and the kinds of in-class interaction which could accompany each unit were a major concern. From the beginning, I was striving to build rapport between the students and positive attitudes towards themselves and the language. The topics move from the personal to the global--the concrete to the abstract--just as the kinds of student-student interaction range from class compositions through individual storytelling to debates. In a sense, this parallels Freire's initial emphasis on the culture of the people, which is followed by descriptions of the students' personal realities, and ultimately results in problem-solving activities.

I. Poetry writing--five hours, including the course introduction

The syllabus begins with a unit on poetry writing because of the extreme satisfaction and sense of power which results from successfully composing poetry in another language. For many students, such experiences also provide the first glimpse of the beauty and playfulness of the language through the use of rhyme, rhythm, and imagery. In addition to being enlightening and invigorating, these activities set a

precedent for the ways in which the group will be working together throughout, and develop the students' sense of creativity and ownership in what they are producing from the start.

The unit comprises a discussion of previous experience with, and attitudes toward, poetry; a look at what poetry is and isn't; and key concepts such as poetic license, rhyme, and rhythm. There are group and individual writing activities within two forms of poetry--haiku, and a twelve-line form consisting of rhymed couplets, the last words of which are generated by the whole class; as well as reading and critiquing of one another's work.

II. Letter writing--seven hours

The second unit, letter writing, gives students the forms and conventions of business and personal letters. Letter writing is perhaps the most common form of written expression, and is of immediate practical use to the students. Example of various types of letters are examined, e.g., "Dear Abbey," letters to the editor, letters to universities, and business letters. Students exchange and answer one another's letters, and one letter is submitted to the teacher for evaluation.

III. Physical description--eight hours

This unit focuses on describing places and things, using spatial order to provide the structure of the writing. Special emphasis is given to prepositional phrases and the ordering of adjectives. The initial exercises involve describing objects and spaces in the class or which the students bring to class. Some work may also be done here with describing the physical characteristics of people. The

unit concludes with each student discussing and writing about a place which is special to him or her.

IV. Chronological description--ten hours

This part of the course emphasizes using time to structure writing. The focus here is again on prepositional phrases, with work on verb tenses, as well. The central activity is storytelling, which is a great deal of fun, and tends to bring the class closer together. By the end of the unit, students will have told and written stories from their own experience.

V. Describing a process--five hours

This unit builds on the previous one, but with the goal of explaining rather than entertaining. During the initial activities, students guide one another through various simple tasks. The unit ends with students discussing and then writing about something which they know how to do but no one else in the class does.

VI. Comparing and contrasting--ten hours

The standard ways of showing differences and similarities are the focus of this unit. The class discussions turn around such cultural phenomenon as the role of women in society, familial relationships, values, etc. The key words and phrases here are somewhat more slippery than in the previous sections, so a considerable portion of the class time is focused on them. Possibilities for a final paper include comparing and contrasting women's roles in a particular country now and at some earlier time, an individual student's lifestyle

and values with those of his or her parents, and some aspects of a student's culture with its equivalent in the United States.

VII. Argumentation and stating opinions--ten hours

This last unit familiarizes students with the ways in which positions are stated and arguments developed. The in-class activities take the form of debates on various issues. Inductive reasoning, definition, analysis, and the presentation of evidence are the skills being worked on. A possibility for the major writing assignment here is asking students to respond to the statement: "All the world is becoming like the U.S.A."

The final week is dedicated to bringing a sense of closure to the course. This is a time for extra work in any areas which continue to be problematic for a majority of the students. In addition, students are asked to produce a final version of a paper of their choosing, and each paper is then critiqued in class. Some time is also allotted for individual student-teacher conferences.

ERROR CORRECTION

There are three points which teachers must consider in developing a strategy for error correction. First of all, the students need positive reinforcement; second, they need to know about the areas in which they have to improve; and finally, they need to be helped in developing positive attitudes, interest, and abilities in editing and rewriting their work. These may be summarized in one basic idea which, while obvious, is sometimes lost in the shuffle--the goal of the class is the development of independently skillful and productive writers, not the compilation of a folder full of error-free writing.

Through the process of dialogue, students are made responsible to, and are receiving feedback from, themselves, the teacher, and their peers. All of these "critics" are active in the total process, from pre-writing to final draft. This makes clear to the students that it is effective communication, not the teacher's notion of perfect writing, which sets the standard.

Much of the most important work with error correction occurs before the students sit down to write their essays. The class activities carried out before writing begins are not simply stimuli for the sake of generating lively discussions and interesting papers; they are also intended to help students identify errors in content, logic, organization, grammar, and vocabulary by allowing relatively risk-free opportunities to practice what they will be writing. The emphasis is not on avoiding errors but on anticipating them and understanding why they create problems.

There are essentially two phases of error correction in the pre-writing stage. The first involves sentence-level practice of the structures and

concepts appropriate to the kind of writing being worked on. In the course at Boston University, the students' textbooks provided for much of this practice, although I supplemented the texts with many handouts of my own. This is the time when most errors will be made, and most correcting should be done. In-class production and editing exercises involving small-group work are an excellent way to practice these new forms. Maintaining an atmosphere of adventure and experimentation is especially important at this stage.

As students become more comfortable with the concepts, the second phase of the pre-writing stage is begun. Here, the students prepare for the discussions by making rough outlines and notes of what they want to write about, and present their ideas through the classroom dialogue. I check and comment on the outlines, and the whole class participates in the discussion of each student's presentation. The questions and praise which come out of these activities move the students into the next stage, which is the production of a first draft. It is important to make clear from the start that several drafts will be the norm, and that rewriting is not punishment but simply part of the process through which all writers go.

When the students are ready to hand in their first drafts, some class time should be taken to allow them to read over what they have written and correct any mistakes they find. The idea of proofreading will likely be a novel concept for many students. If they find things they think might be problems but aren't sure about, they should be marked at this time, perhaps with a question mark or brief note.

The purpose here is to develop what Wilga M. Rivers and Mary S. Temperley refer to as an "attitude of alertness to erroneous forms, and pleasure in finding the facts when in doubt."[10] Students should be encouraged to use each other as resources, as well as the teacher, dictionaries, and

grammars.

Once the papers are in the teacher's hands, there are two basic types of error correction which may be employed. The first, obviously, is marking the papers. I give my students a handout (an example of which is included in the appendix) which contains the symbols that I will be using on their papers and journal entries. These symbols take into account the most common types of errors, but by no means are they all-inclusive. The advantage of symbols is that they provide a middle ground between actually writing the correction and simply underlining the problem. The symbols require that the students be actively involved in dealing with the feedback, while at the same time they are not mystified by it. If I feel that, even with the symbols, a student might not understand the problem, I give extra clues.

I have not found that the color of the marks is of much consequence. There are many teachers who shun red as being too bloody, and perhaps there is something to that, but what seems more important to me is the quality and quantity of the marks. If the writing is laced with errors, it may not be advisable to mark them all. As Rivers and Temperly point out:

> The place for fastidious correction is at the stage of cognition and production exercises. If students are making serious errors persistently, more practice exercises should be provided at the point of difficulty. When students are writing to express their ideas, corrections should focus on incomprehensibility, inapt word choice, and errors in grammatical form or syntactic structure which mislead the reader. The most serious mistakes must be those which native readers tolerate the least, rather than those kinds of inaccuracies which native writers themselves commit. . . . Penalizing students for sheer inaccuracy of surface detail at the expressive stage encourages the production of dull, unimaginative, simple sentences, with students taking refuge in the forms they have thoroughly mastered over a long period of study.[11]

The other option in dealing with errors at this stage is peer correction. I have tried various techniques with peer correction, and gotten

mixed results. There are many variables working in such exercises--some students may hesitate to comment on problems, depending on cultural factors, their sense of their own abilities, and their general feelings as to the appropriateness and purpose of the activity; other students have a tendency to be over zealous in their critiques. Still, I believe that the potential gains of such activities far outweigh the risks.

The most effective technique I have found involves the selection of one paragraph (or section, depending on how the student has paragraphed the work) from each student's paper. I then type the selection on a ditto, triple spaced. The following are two such selections, along with the instructions which came with the handout.

Work with a partner.

1. Identify the topic sentence. If there is not an appropriate topic sentence, write one.
2. Check for information which does not belong in the paragraph and cross it out.
3. Look for comparison/contrast words and phrases, and underline them. Are they used correctly? If not, make the necessary changes.
4. Mark any other problems.

Example 1

American culture and Japanese one are alike in many ways Some points in our culture, you can say it is just like American. What I want to say is that both of us have a lot of importance on the family. We both are taking care of our own family, but on the other hand, Japanese parents are more protective than American ones. Japanese parents hope their children will do likewise even though their children want to go on the way they choose. In the ball game, we shout all together like a football game in West Germany. People shout like sing a song.

Example 2

Obviously, after their marriage, women might not have opportunity to have a career particularly after children were born. Children's

> education, cooking, household were the only aspiration of women in the past and they could not have been otherwise. Currently, the strong side of women is being reinforced as leaving family behind and encountering a hostile environment. Sometimes women become the supporter of the family because they find a job easily than men. In this case cooking, children's education, household duties are shared and at the same time technological developments gives french housewives many invintions such as dishwashers, wacum cleaners and frozen foods.

These examples are from first-draft comparison/contrast essays written about two-thirds of the way through a middle-intermediate writing class at Boston University's Center for English Language Orientation Programs. There were eight such paragraphs on the handout, and sixteen students in the class. The author of each paragraph was always one of the partners in the critique.

I moved from group to group, acting as cheer leader and referee throughout the activity. Afterwards, each group reported to the class on any changes they had made.

In the first example, after trying to find an appropriate way to use the word "likewise" and dealing with some other structural and mechanical problems, the students focused their discussion on whether or not football in West Germany demonstrated similarities between Japanese and American cultures.

In the second example, the questions were focused on whether or not the development of the paragraph supported the topic--that women's careers might be jeopardized after marriage. After a heated debate, the author finally agreed that there was too much information, and they resolved the problem by dividing the paragraph into two, the first dealing with the traditional role of women and the barriers to change, and the second dealing with changes in household technology and sex roles.

A similar activity, on a smaller scale, involves selecting individual sentences which contain typical errors and writing them on the board. The whole class then participates in solving the problem. I find that unless everyone is completely stumped, which rarely happens, it is best to simply write what they suggest, only making comments such as, "Well, it could be improved." If there are several reasonable options, I try to get the students to come up with all of them, and then look at the differences.

These types of activities are extremely productive, fostering a sense of experimentation, and providing incentive for students to look for their own mistakes. With the correction symbols on the whole paper, and the paragraph and sentence critiquing process, students are generally able to produce a substantially improved second draft. The decision as to whether additional drafts are required is somewhat arbitrary. In many cases I decide to move on to new material, leaving the option of continued revision to the students.

The students are, however, required to keep copies of everything they have written for the class. This is important for their final project, evaluation of their work in the student-teacher conferences, and as a personal record of their progress in the language.

Teachers' attitudes towards errors, and decisions about how to handle error correction, are crucial to the development of competent, confident, independent writers. This is the area which holds the most potential for learning, but it is also the area in which dialogue can be most easily shattered. Perhaps the key is to place equal emphasis on competence, confidence, and independence--not an easy task, but certainly an important one.

THE USE OF MODELS

Virtually all writing texts and most writing classes make use of models at some point. These models may be of two basic types: authentic (selections from the writing of native speakers taken from literature or other found sources), and specially written (passages written by textbook authors or teachers). In either case, there is a fundamental challenge for teachers in using an alien product to strengthen the original process which students are involved in.[12]

While the merits of models are clear--they provide exposure to lexical items, structural patterns, conventions, modes of rhetorical organization, stylistic variety, and windows on culture--it is not clear that reading a model passage automatically helps students to understand how good writing is made. Models allow student to see the product but not the process.

As I stated earlier in this paper, the distinguishing characteristic of written speech is the need for it to create its own context. Thus, if models are to be useful in helping students to produce effective writing, they will need to provide insight into how the author controlled and communicated his or her ideas.

To accomplish this with my students I focus on what Linda Lanon Blanton in Intermediate Composition Practice: Book 2, refers to as "key words and phrases," as well as basic principles of outlining, and present my students with an analogy of road signs helping a driver to navigate on a dark and stormy night. The presentation of the analogy goes something like this: "Imagine that you are in the mountains trying to get home. Visibility is low. Along the way you see signs like this or this or this . These signs help you to get safely and easily

to your destination. The people who made the road don't need them because they know the terrain, but they are not with you now, and without those extra clues, you would have a lot of difficulty getting through the mountains. You might get lost or give up, or at least you would be very tired and angry at the engineers by the time you arrived.

"Writing is similar to designing a road. The writer's job is not just to get from point 'A' to point 'B'; he or she must also be sure that the reader can do the same." The class then examines a model which I have written, and we discuss the ways in which the passage uses the structures, conventions, and vocabulary under consideration. We also talk about the way I went about writing the passage and problems I had while writing.

The first point about models, then, is that they must clearly contain the elements of writing which are being taught. Added to that point is a recommendation which relates to my discussion of dialogue and teacher participation, as well as the earlier point made in this section questioning the usefulness of alien products. I believe that teacher-generated models which arise out of the teacher's participation in the dialogue are more effective than the other types of models.

I have come to this conclusion through experience with both types of models--authentic and specially written--and am convinced that while this third approach requires a great deal of effort on the part of the teacher, the rewards are great for both teacher and students. The teacher gains invaluable insight into both the kind of writing being taught and his or her own process of writing. In turn, the students respond both to the material and teacher on a far deeper level than they do with external examples. They are interested in the teacher and appreciate the effort, and they have been participants in the activities from which the models

originated.

In the appendix, there are three examples of models which I wrote and used in class. They deal with physical description, using chronological order, and comparing and contrasting. My process in developing and using the models was as follows: First, I tried to think of things in my own experence which the class would identify strongly with. Then, I simply walked in and talked about those things--sentimental feelings about the place where I played as a child for the unit on physical description, an incredibly tense 36 hours at an international airport for the unit on using chronological order, and thoughts on my parents and myself for the unit on comparing and contrasting. Then, I asked the class to think about similar places or experiences or ideas overnight and to come to class the next day prepared to talk. That night, I wrote my model. After all of the class had had a chance to speak and interact, and we had done some initial study of the teaching points, I handed out copies of the description, story, or essay I had written. These were intended partly to entertain, partly to inspire, and partly as an academic exercise--I always had the class find the particular key words and expressions (also provided in the appendix) we were working with at the time and discuss their use in the context.

There are, of course, some risks in providing this type of model, the principal one being that the process of writing is a bit artificial. It is unlikely that a completely natural piece of writing would contain so many of these words and phrases. When I sat down to write the models, I knew I had to use as many of them as possible, and to a certain extent that knowledge controlled what I wrote. This seems to me to have been a reasonable compromise, however, because my purposes were different from those of normal writing.

The students should be made to understand that they are not expected to use all of the words and phrases in what they are writing. While one of the goals of the activity is to give them an opportunity to experiment with and understand as many of the words and phrases as possible, the primary goal is that they communicate their thoughts effectively.

Occasionally, phrases I used in the models have come back to haunt me in the form of student errors or very stilted writing. It is important to give the students as many examples of ways in which these words and phrases may be used as possible, and also to give them a sense of those which are more commonly used, and those which are reserved for more formal situations.

THE JOURNAL

Following the basic principle of "the more you do, the better you get," requiring students to keep a journal is an excellent tool for helping them to become more comfortable with writing in English. Journals also allow teachers an added basis for monitoring and evaluating students' progress. Journals give students an opportunity to experiment and practice, free of any pressures they may feel with in-class writing. They also provide an outlet for any frustrations the students may be dealing with in the class, in cultural adjustment, or in their personal lives. While the approach to journals varies somewhat with each class as the students' needs, desires, and abilities become clear, the following are some general guidelines which I have found useful.

I require my students to buy special notebooks which will be used exclusively for the journal. This is a seemingly trivial point which, if not carried out, results in nothing but headaches for the teacher, and a devalued product for the students. A filled journal is a treasure which the students can keep with pride, both as a clear record of progress in the language, and as a piece of themselves.

The amount of writing required, and the frequency and manner of teacher responses, depend on the class. I set a policy of at least three pages per week, collected each Wednesday and returned on Friday. Students should write on every other line, and "a page" may be defined more by effort than number of entries or lines. Some students will need to be prodded a bit, but generally, once it has been established that the journal is seen as a vital part of the work for the class, that is not a problem.

The journal format allows for a great deal of variety both in what the

students do and in how the teacher treats the work. Virtually anything goes in the journal, and that should be made clear from the start. While at times it may be appropriate to suggest a topic, style, form, or even voice, I assure students that an honest effort at explaining how much "I hate writing" will be accepted with the same enthusiasm as an analysis of American culture. For the journal, all that matters is that the wheels are turning--burning rubber and flying gravel are fine. Things will get moving eventually.

The comments which I write in the journals are of two basic types. The most important consideration is that the students know they have a sincerely interested reader. Sympathetic remarks, queries, exclamation marks, and even the occasional smiley face are all appropriate gestures.

The second type of comments deal with students' progress in the language. How these are done depends on the needs and expectations of the students. Students generally want their mistakes to be pointed out to them, and the easiest way to do that is to mark them. However, because of the nature of the material, and the fact that it will not be rewritten, a more effective and positive approach is to focus on patterns and progress over time, marking a few accomplishments or recurring problems, and then commenting at the end of the passage.

A final point about journals is that they are confidential. Violation of this basic principle can have a permanently damaging effect on the student-teacher relationship. Innocent as the teacher's intention may be, the student should always be consulted before any other than the prescribed use of the material is made.

CONCLUSION

Authentic education has no easy formulas. However, while it is true that with each different group of students, teachers must use new tactics and materials, I believe that using the principles I have discussed here, and keeping in mind the insights on writing and writing students which I have presented, will allow teachers to greatly increase their effectiveness in training competent, confident, independent writers. I am convinced that by working to resolve the teacher-student contradiction through the establishment of dialogue; by acting in love, humility, and faith; by thinking critically about syllabuses and materials; and by leading the students towards critical thinking through meeting their needs for self-esteem, self-expression, and control, teachers can insure that their students will learn to write to the best of their ability.

I wrote this paper as an example of what one teacher did with one class in applying the principles of dialogue. Obviously, more teachers will need to begin using these principles in writing classes before it may be claimed that what I have suggested is the best way to go about the task of teaching second-language students to write. In my opinion, however, these principles and insights apply in any writing class, and while they demand a great deal teachers, the rewards are great as well. The students begin to sense the power which is theirs; they begin to feel a sense of ownership over the language; they develop positive attitudes towards themselves; essentially, they begin to think critically in the language and to act in that world. Such, after all, should be the true goals of education.

APPENDIX

Physical Description

This is the list of words which appeared in the students' books for the unit on physical description. The list is taken from, Intermediate Composition Practice: Book 2, by Linda Lonon Blanton, page 7. The models which I wrote were based on these lists.

above
across
adjacent to
against
along
around
at
attached to

behind
below
beneath
beside
between

from

here

in
in back (of)
in front (of)
in the center (of)
inside

near
next to

on
on either side (of)
on top (of)
outside
over

surrounded by
surrounding

to the left (of)
to the right (of)
there
through

under

Model for Physical Description

When I was a boy, I had a special place to go if things got too complicated (like when my mother wanted me to do the dishes, or my father had a job for me on the farm, or I'd gotten in trouble at school). It was a big old white barn. Inside was a world of adventures and dreams; outside was reality. Even today I can see the secret hiding places, tunnels in the hay, and forts made out of baskets, although now there are no kids playing there, and the beautiful antique building has been converted into a market where my family sells apples and peaches.

In my memory, I always enter the barn from below, walking past the fuel tanks which are adjacent to the entrance, and stopping briefly to play with my dog, Duke, who is supposed to be guarding the fuel but is far too friendly for that job. As I enter, the stairs are to my left, and in front of me is a large pen full of steers waiting to go to market. They moo at me, and I throw them some hay.

Beside the livestock area is a long dark passage which runs between the steer pen and a large storage room where machinery is kept. At the back of that passage is a hay chute which rises diagonally to the hay loft above. I crawl up the chute along the cool stone blocks, go through a hole cut in the ancient wooden beams, and step onto the main floor.

Here is where the best memories lie. To my right, there are two huge sliding doors. The doors are closed, and the spacious barn has a golden dusky light. Behind me is the hay loft, with its mountains of sweet-smelling hay rising two stories to the rafters, and usually, a litter of kittens tumbling over each other. Across the main floor from me is a second stairway, located in what used to be another hay loft. Now that side

of the barn is a two-story storage area for apple crates and baskets--and visions of castles and dungeons. In the center of the main floor is a trap door through which all imaginary intruders into my fantasies are pushed back into the world beneath my private universe.

I stand for awhile, taking in the sights, sounds, and smells of my childhood. Then, to conclude these visits to my special place, I climb the stairs and crawl to the top of the crates. From on top of the crates, at the peak of the roof among the barn swallow nests, I stare out of a tiny window. The barn is surrounded by fields and orchards, and everything seems peaceful and uncomplicated.

People would think I was crazy if they caught me up there today, but no one can stop me from going there in my mind. So, if you see me staring out the window when I'm supposed to be teaching, just yell, "Supper's ready!" and I'll be down from the barn in a flash.

Chronological Order

This is the list of words and phrases which appeared in the students' books for the unit on chronological order. (Blanton, page 28.)

after _____
afterwards
_____ ago
always
as _____
as soon as
at the (appropriate) time

before _____
by _____
by that time
by then

during _____
during that time
during those years (months, etc,)

eventually

first
from _____ to _____
from then on

gradually

in _____

later (on)

never
next
now

on _____

prior to _____

still
some _____ later
soon
subsequently

the first time
the _____ time
the last time
then

until _____
upon _____

when
whenever

years (months, days, etc.) later

Model for Chronological Order

All of us have done stupid things in our lives which, while they are happening, seem terrible, but afterwards become stories we enjoy telling again and again. The first time I told this particular story, the only audience I had was my journal, and as I wrote I had no idea how or where the tale would end. From that time until the present the title has remained the same: "The Dumbest Thing I've Ever Done." I hope I never need to change the title.

Five years ago, during my junior year of college, I decided I wanted to go to the Soviet Union on a study tour. The tour was in April, but before I could go I had to have money, so I worked for my father from December on. Prior to the trip, however, I also had to read 2,000 pages of Russian history and write a twenty-page paper. I had very little fun during that time, and when (after what seemed to be an endless winter) spring finally arrived, I thought I was ready for anything.

Whenever one is planning to leave the country, the first step is normally to get a visa. But our group had problems with that little detail, and the small yellow pieces of paper weren't given to us until we arrived in New York. In fact, we were forced to wait in the airport, wondering nervously if our plane would leave without us. Eventually the man from the travel agency appeared, and as soon as I got my visa, I folded it, stuck it in my passport, and rushed onto the waiting 747. . . .

The model ends here. It is a long sad story, with a happy ending which the students already know.

Comparing and Contrasting

The following appeared in the students' books for the unit on comparing and contrasting. (Blanton, page 110.)

Here are some special words and phrases for similarities:

alike
as _____ as
both
in the same way
just
like
likewise
resemble
similar to
similarly
the same _____ as

You might need some of the following when you are discussing differences.

although
differ from
different from
even so
even though
however
in contrast to
nevertheless
on the contrary
on the other hand
otherwise
still
while
yet

Model for Comparison and Contrast

My parents and I are alike in many ways, yet there are so many differences between us that I often lose my sense of perspective. Obviously, whether or not we resemble each other in the eyes of an outside observer, there must be many similarities. After all, they guided me through my most formative years. At this point in my life, however, it is the things we don't have in common which seem to matter the most. That is why I think it is very important and useful for me to stop and look carefully at the ways in which I am similar to and different from my parents. Perhaps someday I too will be trying to understand why "kids these days are so strange."

I think every little boy wants to grow up to be just like his father. In the same way, parents model the social, occupational, ethical, and philosophical ideals which they want to pass on to their children. They live their lives in the best way they know, and hope their children will do likewise. Sayings such as "Like father, like son" and "He's a chip off the old block" are common expressions of this relationship, and my family is no exception.

Just as my parents value rural life, I also appreciate the lifestyle which one has on a farm. Nevertheless, I have chosen to live in the city. And no doubt it is because my parents take their religion so seriously that I too have thought long and hard about my religious views--even though they differ greatly from those of my parents. It could not have been otherwise; still, it is often difficult to accept these differences.

Unlike earlier, simpler times, when society had clear notions of good and evil, right and wrong, life today is very complicated. In contrast to stories of good cowboys in white hats and bad cowboys in black hats, our

stories are of Russian intervention in Afghanistan and American intervention in Nicaragua.

Similarly, the solutions to personal problems don't seem as clear as they once seemed. Although my parents believe in heaven and hell, such a "black and white" ending to all the colors of life seems unlikely to me.

On the other hand, while it is true that I don't have the same beliefs as my parents, it is not true that I think they are wrong. On the contrary, I have a deep respect for my parents' beliefs. Those beliefs have been the foundation of a good life for my parents. Even so, I do not feel that their beliefs are necessarily right for me.

Hopefully, we can all learn to both respect and disagree. Wouldn't life be boring if we were all the same?

Correction Symbols

Sp — Misspelled word. Try to determine the correct spelling by consulting a dictionary.

¶ — Paragraph. You have begun a new topic and need to begin a new paragraph. It is necessary to indent the first line of every paragraph.

X — Omit. You have written a word, letter, or a punctuation mark which is not necessary.

R-O — Run-on. You have put two or more clauses together, and you don't have enough connectors. You must write the sentence again with the correct number of connectors or divide the sentence into more than one sentence using the correct punctuation and capitals.

VT — Verb tense. You have made a mistake in verb tense. Try to determine how you should correct this mistake by assessing when the action happened (happens, will happen). Look at the other verbs in your paragraph.

O — Insertion necessary. You have omitted something. Put in the necessary word.

C — Capital. You have not used a capital where you should have or you have used a capital where you don't need to.

~ — Reverse the letters or words.

P — Punctuation. You have made an error in punctuation or you need a punctuation mark but have not used one.

VA — Verb agreement. Your verb does not agree with your subject.

A — Agreement. Your word does not agree with the number you have given.

? — Not clear. I don't understand what you mean. Correct the sentence so that the meaning is clear.

WW — Diction. You have used the wrong word. Try to determine the correct word.

frag — Fragment. You have written an incomplete sentence. It needs a subject and/or a verb. You must write the sentence again to make it a complete thought.

NOTES

[1] Marlene Scardamalia, Carl Bereiter, and Hillel Goelman, "The Role of Production Factors in Writing Ability," in What Writers Know, ed. Martin Nystrand (New York: Academic Press, 1982), p. 189.

[2] Scardamalia, et al., pp. 181-182.

[3] E. D. Hirsh, Jr., The Philosophy of Writing (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 7.

[4] Thomas Buckingham and William C. Pech, "An Experience Approach to Teaching Composition," TESOL Quarterly, No. 1 (March 1976), p. 56.

[5] Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: The Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1970), p. 58.

[6] Freire, p. 59.

[7] Freire, p. 82.

[8] Paulo Freire, Speech given at the Brazilian Congress of Reading, Campinas, Brazil, 1981; rpt. Journal of Education, No. 1 (Winter 1983), pp. 10-11.

[9] Linda Lonon Blanton, Intermediate Composition Practice: Book 2 (Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers, 1983), pp. 10-11.

[10] Wilga M. Rivers and Mary S. Temperly, A Practical Guide to the Teaching of English as a Second Language (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 272.

[11] Rivers and Temperly, p. 321.

[12] Cynthia B. Watson, "The Use and Abuse of Models in the E.S.L. Writing Class," TESOL Quarterly, No. 1 (March 1982), p. 12.

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